

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A system for ensuring availability of network  
2 resources for conference calls, comprising:  
3 endpoints that request the conference calls;  
4 a resource scheduler for receiving the  
5 conference call requests; and  
6 a gatekeeper communicatively coupled to the  
7 resource scheduler for managing the network  
8 resources.
- 1 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the gatekeeper  
2 includes a connectivity policy module for maintaining  
3 network policies.
- 1 3. The system of claim 2, wherein the network policies  
2 include call authorization policies.
- 1 4. The system of claim 2, wherein the network policies  
2 include call management policies.
- 1 5. The system of claim 2, wherein the network policies  
2 include network bandwidth management policies.
- 1 6. The system of claim 2, wherein the gatekeeper manages  
2 the network resources based on the conference call  
3 requests and the network policies.
- 1 7. The system of claim 6, wherein the gatekeeper  
2 includes a bandwidth module communicatively coupled  
3 to the connectivity policy module for determining  
4 network bandwidth availability for the conference  
5 call requests.

- 1 8. The system of claim 7, wherein the gatekeeper  
2 includes a call authorization and management module  
3 communicatively coupled to the bandwidth module.
- 1 9. The system of claim 8, wherein the call authorization  
2 and management module maintains a list of ongoing  
3 conference calls.
- 1 10. The system of claim 8, wherein the call authorization  
2 and management module manages access of the endpoints  
3 to the network resources.
- 1 11. The system of claim 6, wherein management of the  
2 network resources includes determining if sufficient  
3 network resources are available to connect the  
4 conference calls associated with the conference call  
5 requests.
- 1 12. The system of claim 11, wherein if the gatekeeper  
2 determines that sufficient network resources are  
3 available to connect the conference calls, the  
4 resource scheduler schedules the conference calls.
- 1 13. The system of claim 11, wherein if the gatekeeper  
2 determines that sufficient network resources are  
3 unavailable to connect the conference calls at  
4 requested times, the resource scheduler notifies the  
5 endpoints of alternate times for requesting  
6 conference calls.

1 14. A method for ensuring availability of network  
2 resources for a conference call, comprising the steps  
3 of:

4 requesting the conference call;  
5 receiving the conference call request by a  
6 resource scheduler;  
7 accessing a connectivity policy module; and  
8 determining if sufficient network resources are  
9 available to connect the conference call.

1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the connectivity  
2 policy module maintains network policies.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the connectivity  
2 policy module accesses a bandwidth module for  
3 determining available network resources.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the bandwidth module  
2 accesses a call authorization and call management  
3 module for determining available network resources.

1 18. The method of claim 17, wherein determining if  
2 sufficient network resources are available to connect  
3 the conference call is based upon the conference call  
4 request, the policies maintained by the connectivity  
5 policy module, and available network resources.

1 19. The method of claim 18, wherein if sufficient network  
2 resources are available to connect the conference  
3 call, the resource scheduler schedules the conference  
4 call.

1 20. The method of claim 18, wherein if sufficient network  
2 resources are unavailable to connect the conference  
3 call, the resource scheduler notifies the requester  
4 of the conference call of alternate times.

1 21. A system for ensuring availability of network  
2 resources for a conference call, comprising:  
3 means for requesting the conference call;  
4 means for receiving the conference call request;  
5 means for accessing a connectivity policy  
6 module, the connectivity policy module having  
7 connectivity policies;  
8 means for determining available network  
9 resources; and  
10 means for determining if sufficient network  
11 resources are available to connect the  
12 conference call based on connectivity  
13 policies, the conference call request, and the  
14 available network resources.

1 22. A system for allocating network resources for  
2 conference calls, comprising:  
3 a plurality of local area networks;  
4 a plurality of endpoints coupled to the local  
5 area  
6 networks for requesting conference calls;  
7 a resource scheduler coupled to the local area  
8 networks for scheduling the conference calls;  
9 and  
10 a gatekeeper coupled to the resource scheduler  
11 for allocating the network resources to the  
12 conference calls;

- 1 23. The system of claim 22, wherein each of the plurality
- 2 of endpoints is a videoconference-enabled device.

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